Newsletter of the African Burial Ground & Five Points Archaeological Projects

U P D A T E

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In This Issue...

African Religions In America

Karen McKoy

The religion of African Americans, like all religions, grew as a way of ordering the world and building the collective. In the region of Africa from which the slaves were principally drawn, the notable aspect of religion is its inextricable connection to the daily experiences of the African. In *African Religions and Philosophy,* John S. Mbiti asserts that:

> Traditional religions are not primarily for the individual, but for his community of which he is a part...To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community. A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence. To be without one of these corporate elements of life is to be out of the whole picture. Therefore, to be without religion amounts to a self-excommunication from the entire life of society, and African peoples do not know how to exist without religion.

The undermining and destruction of this traditional solidarity by the Africans ensuing enslavement led to the search for new values, identity and security to replace those which were satisfactorily supplied by the traditional religion. This search began on the other side of the Atlantic, before the Africans were taken aboard the slave ships, in the coastal barracoons where slaves with different kinship or nationalities were manacled together and continued during the ordeal of the "Middle Passage" {Raboteau 1980:53}. (cont. on page 3)

POSTAL COMMITTEE REJECTS AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND COMMEMORATIVE STAMP! -- SEE PAGE 2

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We'd love to hear from you! Due to anticipated volume, the OPEI reserves the right to edit or limit the number of letters printed .

Dear Dr. Wilson,

It is with great frustration and outrage that I inform you that a representative of the Post Office has verbally notified me that our request for the issuance of an African Burial Ground Commemorative Stamp has been rejected. The recommendations for rejection were issued by the Liaison Office for the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) and was decided by CSAC's review board on January 15, 1995. The representative did not offer any detailed information about why the request was rejected, but instead suggested that I direct a letter for the specifications of the Committee's rejection to the Postmaster General. I mailed my request on February 6, 1995 and await what the agent said would be a quick response.

As you know, to date, since our initial extension of the stamp petition deadline, we have collected over 40,000 signatures from 36 states across the U.S. and 10 countries of the world. The irony has not escaped me that on what was basically the eve of Black History Month, the Postmaster General unveiled yet another Hollywood creation, Marilyn Monroe, while the significant contributions of those African and African American ancestors, comprising the oldest and largest excavated burial ground of its period in the United States, have not been honored.

The representative indicated to me that they had received no congressional letters of support for the stamp at their offices. We must therefore increase our efforts to see that the Postmaster General understands the great importance of this site and our outrage that it has been denied.

I recommend the following plan of action:

1) **We should begin by demanding that our Congressional Representatives inundate the Postmaster's Office with letters of support for the African Burial Ground Commemorative Stamp.**

2) **We should increase our efforts to collect at least 100,000 signatures for our petition. Completed petitions should continue to be sent to OPEI to be submitted directly to the Postmaster General.**

3) **I am also recommending that we extend the deadline for collecting signatures.**

No commendation or commemoration can ever compensate for what these ancestors gave with their lives. As ship builders, boat pilots, street layers, seamstresses, caretakers and business owners, they laid the infrastructure for America's busiest port city. However, we can make it our duty to see that whatever ways we can recognize their invaluable achievements in our lives today and in the creation of this country, be bestowed reverently and expediently in their memory. I plan to work with our communities to ensure that this Commemorative Stamp becomes a reality.

Thank you for your assistance on the realization of this worthy cause.

Richard Brown
Former Federal Steering Committee Member

(cont. on page 13)

African Burial Ground Update

o On December 8, 1994 Hon. Albertina Sisulu, anti-apartheid activist, union organizer and member of Parliament in South Africa, paid a visit to the African Burial Ground where she participated in a libation ceremony and prayed for her late husband, former ANC leader Walter Sisulu. Pictured right are Bro. Leroy Applin, one of the coordinators of Mrs. Sisulu's visit; Mrs. Sisulu, and an unidentified escort. (Photo credit: E. Brown)

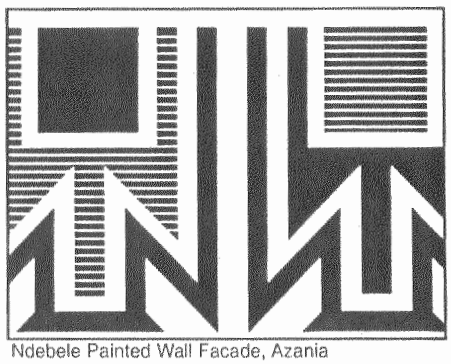
o On December 19, 1994, Noel Pointer, a strong advocate for the preservation of the African Burial Ground, passed away after suffering a stroke. His rich legacy of music and humanitarian spirit will be continued through the Noel Pointer Foundation - - see page 11.

(cont. on page 13)

African Religions In America (cont. from page1)

When Africans arrived in Manhattan beginning in 1626, they did not bring with them a monolithic culture. The vast majority of enslaved Africans were transported from West Africa and the Congo-Angola region. This territory encompassed several hundred miles and embraced societies and cultures as diverse as the Akan, Ashantis, Fantis, and the Dahomeans. There were many significant differences among the religions of these various West African peoples, however, beneath the obvious variances, enough fundamental similarities did exist to allow for exchanges of religious ideas. Most Africans believed that a Supreme Being was the Creator whom one addressed directly through prayers, sacrifices, rituals, songs and dances. This concept of God or the Supreme Being as the Creator is indicated by the names for African gods which when translated mean "Creator," "Molder" or "Maker." Several West African societies also believed that God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. To the Akan, God is known as "He who knows or sees all." Among some Africans, like the Akan and Ashanti, one of the names for God describes Him as "the All-powerful" or "the Almighty" {Mbiti:31-32}. Almost all Africans associate God's home as being some place in the sky beyond the reach of human beings. According to Mbiti, "some have myths telling of how men came from the sky; or of how God separated from men and withdrew Himself into the sky, whence nobody could directly reach Him" {Mbiti:33}.Yet, in spite of spatial distance between God and his human creation, God's immanence is also acknowledged so that human beings can and do in fact establish contact with Him through the many acts of worship. Such acts include sacrifices, offerings, prayers and invocation.

The most distinctive characteristic of traditional African religions is that they are national. Unlike universal religions, with their concept of a distant future which promises "redemption" from the "hell-fires" of death, immortality and the gift of resurrection, African religions remained national {Mbiti:99}. Each religion bonds into a community the people among whom it has evolved, who at least mythologically trace their community's religious history to the first person created by God or to leaders responsible for establishing a particular structure of the society.



Ndebele Painted Wall Facade, Azania
©Geoffrey Williams, 1971

One traditional religion, therefore, cannot be propagated in another group, although through conquest and adoption of others, groups often "converted" religious outsiders to their own religious beliefs. Other vehicles for the spread of religious ideas from one people to another are migration, intermarriage and expert knowledge being sought by individuals of another group.

When the exchange of ideas occurs as a result of conquest, the gods of the conquerors are added to the pantheon of gods of the conquered. This flexibility of traditional African religions is intimately related to its polytheistic nature and the utilitarian manner in which Africans view and respond to their own gods, supreme and otherwise. As Melville Herskovits has noted, Africans perceive their deities:

> as forces which function intimately in the daily life of the people. For a super-natural power, if He is to be accepted must justify his existence (and merit the offerings of his worshippers) by accomplishing what his devotees ask of him. He need not be completely effective...But the gods must as a minimum care for the well-being of the people, and protect them not only from the forces of nature but also from human enemies. [It stands to reason, then,] that if one tribe is conquered by another...the gods of the conquerors are [perceived to be] more powerful than those of the conquered, and all considerations dictate that the deities of this folk be added to the less powerful Gods already worshipped {Herskovits, 1990:72}.

Since this tendency countenances the premise that there is an indisputable relationship between the comparative power of gods and the strength of those who worship them, its relevance becomes exceedingly important when considering the enslaved African's readiness to accept and adopt Christian religious ideas, beliefs and doctrines.

The African practice of borrowing from differing groups continued during the "Middle Passage." As the newly enslaved Africans attempted to make sense of the position in which they found themselves, it was through conversing with their fellow captives and the resultant exchange of ideas that they were able to contrive various explanations, religious and otherwise, for their situation.

(cont. on page 13)

NOTES FROM THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY LABORATORY

Dental Observations of the New York African Burial Ground Skeletal Population

Mark E. Mack,
Laboratory Director,
Howard University,
Washington, D.C.

New York City's African Burial Ground (NYABG) skeletal population consists of approximately 400 individuals primarily representing enslaved Africans who lived and died in the colonial city of New York during the late 17th century and throughout the 18th century. The major goals of the bioanthropological research project focus on this population's origins, their physical quality of life, and the biocultural transformation of these African progenitors into who we, as their descendants, are today. This is the first in a series of reports on special aspects of our project's work effort.

One of the most important structures of the skeleton that aid in these analyses is the dentition (teeth and their surrounding structures). The dentition is important to bioanthropological research for a number of reasons. First of all, teeth are the most preserved elements of the skeleton. Teeth are the most resistant of all skeletal elements to chemical and physical destruction through time, because approximately 97% of,the chemical composition of teeth is madeof calcium salts.

Secondly, the dentition provides a wealth of information about a person. Teeth reflect the person's age, population origins and cultural traditions, as well as what foods comprised the person's diet. Additionally, the dentition provides a biological record of one's childhood and adult health status and overall physical well-being. The study and analysis of the dentitions of NYABG skeletal population provides some of the clearest data for our research into their life histories.

Examining the dental development of each person provides a strong indicator of his or her age; this is especially true in children where the crown and root formation of teeth as well as the timing of their eruption through the gumline is strongly genetically controlled. From observing the developmental stages of deciduous (baby teeth) and permanent teeth of a child, his or her age can be accurately determined with errors of less than one year. As a result, we know with confidence that the condition of enslavement in New York was characterized by abnormally high rates of infant and child mortality. Stark evidence of this can be seen from the mother-infant burial of 335/356. The baby was a newborn as proven by his/her dental development, and the mother probably died during childbirth.

Teeth provide substantial evidence of one's population affiliation. For example, tooth shape (morphology) and cusp patterns are strongly genetically controlled and inherited from generation to generation. Similarities in tooth and cusp pattern morphology between elationships between different cultural groups. One goal of the research effort is to compare tooth and cusp pattern morphologies of the NYABG population with those of contemporary African groups as well as African Americans in order to determine where our ancestors originated and how much we have evolved from them. Those data are being collected daily.

Cultural traditions and identity can be determined from dental observation. A clear example of this is the wide variety of tooth filing patterns that have been uncovered after cleaning individual dentitions. Our African ancestors, as well as many African groups today, sculpted their teeth as a sign of aesthetic beauty, cultural belonging and/or as a rite of passage. One man (burial 23) had his upper central incisors chipped and filed into an inverted 'V' shape. A woman (burial 340) who was interred with waist-beads, had her upper central incisors filed into hourglass shapes. An elderly man (burial 151) had all four of his upper incisors filed into points. Finally, an adult male (burial 47) had his upper and lower incisors filed so that they meshed together into a wave-like pattern. We anticipate finding a number of other tooth filing patterns which will aid in pinpointing the origins of these individuals.

Two other dental clues to cultural practices are pipe notches and dental grooves. Pipe notches are the result of habitual pipe smoking; after years of use, the stem of a pipe would eventually produce a circular wear pattern where it was placed between the teeth.

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Howard University Report (continued from page 4)

One must remember that before the wide use of cigarettes in the late 19th century, pipe smoking was quite common and the stems of these pipes were very abrasive. Even more importantly, the practice of pipe smoking goes back millennia on the African continent. A woman (burial 68) and three men (burials 11, 46 and 147) all exhibit pipe notches between their teeth. We may be seeing the continuation of an African cultural tradition. Grooves formed on the lingual (toward the tongue) side of incisors and molars provide the evidence for the use of teeth as tools, pulling string or thread through the teeth while sewing or weaving. A man (burial 20) exhibits these grooves on his lower incisors, which may give us some idea of his general occupation or diet, possibly including coarse, fibrous foods such as raw sugar cane.

Nutritional information can be gleaned from the dentition. Calculus, which is made up of food eaten by a person and deposited around the margins of teeth throughout life, can be analyzed and the person's diet can be reconstructed. Many adults have calculus deposits on their teeth and future data should yield clear indications of dietary content. Questions that may be answered include whether our enslaved ancestors had a monotonous diet made up largely of one type of cereal grain (corn or wheat) or one that was more diverse.

The relative absence or presence of pathological conditions such as caries (cavities) and associated abscesses provide evidence of the biological effects of foods commonly eaten as well as the relative accessibility to dental care. It is known that the average diet for anyone living during the colonial period was high in carbohydrates such as corn or wheat flour and sugar, either refined or in the form of molasses, which often led to cavities. The majority of adults in the population have cavities. The molars are mainly affected, and some cavities are so severe that the whole tooth is destroyed and the alveolar bone of the jaw becomes inflamed. The fact that many of the abscesses went untreated reflects the poor health care that was available to them. The young woman who was shot by a musket ball (burial 25) had already lost one lower molar to cavities and had two other molars that were only decaying hollow shells. Children were also affected by cavities; a nine year old child (burial 89) has cavities on his/her deciduous and permanent teeth reflecting a high sugar consumption.

One of the most important uses of teeth is that they provide an indelible record of an individual's lifelong health status. Deciduous teeth develop from four months before birth, and permanent teeth develop from birth up to at least 16 years with third molars. During these periods biologically stressful events such as chronic undernutrition, poor maternal health, fevers and other illnesses can affect the development of teeth in such a way that dental crowding and especially, enamel defects occur. Enamel hypoplasia, an inhibition in enamel matrix deposition that appears as a ring of poorly formed enamel, and enamel hypocalcification, a disruption during tooth mineralization that appears as a white to brown discoloration of the enamel, are two such enamel defects that we study. Because the timing of when these enamel defects developed can be determined, we can ascertain at what ages during their short lives children in this population faced conditions that adversely affected their health. Many infants and children exhibit these enamel defects, from newborns (burials 5,14) to children (burial 7, a 4 year old, and burial 89).

Enamel defects do not disappear with adulthood, and the majority of the New York African Burial Ground population do have enamel defects. A major characterization of this population is that for adults, dental health was universally poor. Poor dental health likely had a deleterious effect on overall health; a person with ill health was more likely to have enamel defects, and a person with enamel defects was more likely to have cavities. A person that had cavities and abscesses had a higher susceptibility to other diseases, due to the strain placed on the immune systemic health problem that went further than just "bad teeth." However, for adults with a relative lack of these de-fects, may provide evidence that the adult was born and raised in a more stable environment than that of those who had died, or the environment too which their children were exposed.

The study and analysis of the dentitions, along with the cranial and postcranial remains of the ancestral population from the New York African Burial Ground is providing our research effort with valuable information that will aid us in giving voices to our long silenced ancestors.

The Biological Anthropology Lab is sponsoring tours every Friday and Saturday from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. We can accommodate tours of up to 30 persons. Alternative times can be arranged during the week. Please call 202.806-5252 for further information and reservations.

National Museum of the American Indian, Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House 212.668.6624
Creation's Journey: Masterworks of Native American Identity and Belief; All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture; This Path We Travel: A Celebration of Contemporary Native American Creativity.

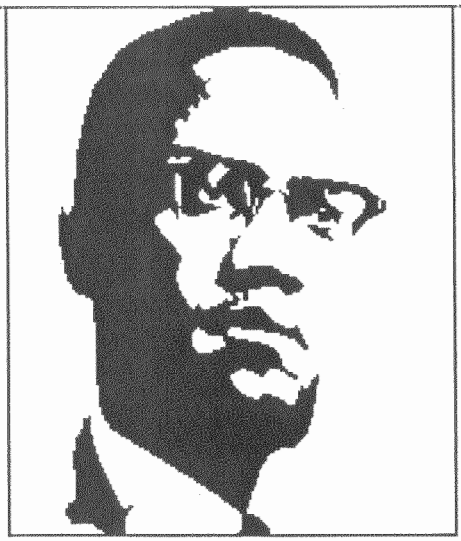
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 515 Malcolm Blvd., NY. 212.481.2200.
o Shona Sculpture of Zimbabwe: The Spirit Within, An exhibition of contemporary art by eight of the most well known Shona sculptors. Through May 8.

o Enduring traditions: Visions of African Art, in Africa and the Diaspora. Through May 8.

The Museum of the City of New York
A Century Apart: Images of Struggle & Spirit, Jacob Riis and Five Contemporary Photographers. Currently on exhibit.

Lewis H. Latimer 1848 - 1928
Scientist and inventor, was a native of Queens. Latimer invented the carbon filament used in light bulbs, and eventually wrote the first book in the United States on electrical lighting. The Queens Borough Public Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd . in Jamaica, Queens, features memorabilia and artifacts that demonstrate his contributions to science. Through May.

I Tell My Heart: The Art of Horace Pippin School Program. 212.288.7733
Designed for young students, the program will introduce the paintings of Horace Pippin and discuss the artist's experience as an African American growing up in Pennsylvania. By appointment only.



EL HAJJ MALIK AL-SHABAZZ

1925-1965

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Compiled by Steve B. Harper

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 40 Lincoln Center Plaza @ 65th Street, NY. 212.870.1630. Onstage: A Century of African American Stage Design - - Through May 20.

Office of Public Education and Interpretation of the African Burial Ground. 212.432.5707
o "The African Burial Ground: An American Discovery" by David Kutz for GSA. Shown every Wednesday in March (except 3/22) see page 20 for special event.

o Volunteer Orientation - March18
o Educators Symposium - April 22
o 3rd Annual Open House - May 20

The Studio Museum of Harlem 144 W 125th St., NY. 212.864.4500
o Emma Amos: Paintings and Prints 1982-1992
o Sam Gilliam: New Monoprints Through May 14.

National Black Theatre's Institute of Action Arts. 2033 National Black Theatre Way (125th and 126th Streets) 212.722.3800

Radical Walking Tours by Bruce Kayton - - Spring/1995 718.492.0069.
o Radical Chelsea
March 25, 1:00 pm

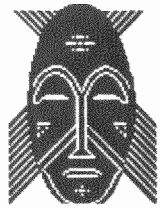
o Greenwich Village I
Sunday, April 2, 1:00 pm

o Harlem
April 23, 1:00 pm

o Radical Central Park
Sunday, May 7 at 1:00 pm

The Pierpont Morgan Library 29 East 36th Street. 212.685.0610. presents: "I Believe in Agitation" which celebrates Frederick Douglass (1817-1895) and his accomplishments in an exhibit scheduled now through August 26.

Museum for African Art 593 Broadway. 212.966.1313
"Exhibition-ism: Museums and



African Art." Artists and Ancestors in African Art -- Through March 5

City Center Stage I, 131 West 55th St., NY. 212.581.1212 presents: "Holiday Heart.' The story of a young girl's struggle to survive childhood with the help of an unconventional guardian angel. Written by Cheryl L. West and directed by Tazewell Thompson. Performances now through April 9.

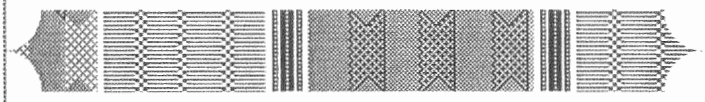
Reclaim The Memories: Black History Tours of Old New York. Winter/Spring Schedule 1995. 914.966.1246
o African Burial Ground & Historic Commons Tour
March 4, 19
April 1, 16, 29

o Harlem Highlights Tour
March 12, April 23

o Wall Street Area Tour
March 18, April 22

o African American Women's History Tour
March 26, April 16

COMMUNITY VOICES



Compiled by Donna Harden Cole
and Steve B. Harper

Since the rediscovery of the African Burial Ground in 1991, community efforts have played an instrumental role in obtaining proper treatment of the human remains and recognition of the site through landmark status. Among the issues still unresolved however, is the educational impact the African Burial Ground will have on our nation's schools. We recently asked a number of concerned citizens, including educators, parents and historians, what steps they felt should be taken to ensure that the curriculum in our schools reflect a more accurate view of New York's early African population. (Ed. note: some responses have been edited due to limited space).

Eric V. Tait, Jr.
E.V.T. Productions Inc.
My gut feeling is the parents, either by themselves or through their local community school boards, must demand updated materials, and that could be textbooks, videos or multi-media CD Rom materials that include a true account and representation of contributions of all people of color in the history and economy of New York City, New York State and the entire United States. Where these materials don't exist in the school's curriculum, the parents and school boards must require that these materials are acquired and placed in the teaching syllabus immediately. The final thing they can do is to support any and every attempt to get this information about our contributions to the history and economy of society documented, whether in books, video or in any other form, and distributed at all levels of learning, from the elementary schools right up to the universities.

Brother Chibale' Elegbarra Ja-Bata
"IN FLIGHT" Productions Inc.
We must realize and come to terms with initiating short term goals and long term goals with the knowledge that all sincere efforts to educate our children will be met with systematic resistance. The whole point is to use our history and the NGUZO SABA, (Seven Principles of Kwanzaa) throughout the entire year as a minimum model and outline for our children. We as parents, primary caretakers and concerned guardians must gain the respect and trust of our children. Once they have that, then they will develop the autonomy and initiative to carry the objectives to its logical conclusion. Use the system if and where we can, but if not, then we must not let that be a brick wall in the pathway; it is only a perception in your mind! Our story is one of continuous struggle. It has never been easy for Afrikan people of good will to accomplish anything in this country. The ancestors have provided another opportunity for us to rise to the occasion; let's not blow it again! Hotep!

Professor Samuel Lilly,
College of New Rochelle
Educating the educators should be the first step. Information should be published and distributed to all educators to serve as a foundation which they can, in turn, build upon. Also, a network established among educators and other interested individuals would greatly assist in developing ways to synthesize this important historical discovery into the mainstream of the education curriculum. Another idea would be to involve our children in special projects, like the commemorative stamp campaign for the African Burial Ground. This process can serve as an entrée to the educational process, give students a sense that what they're doing is part of history in the making and that it is something of great importance that they can be proud to do.

Mr. Byron Saunders, Senior Librarian,
Queens Historical Society
Information should be distributed to inform the public that organizations like the New York and Queens Historical Societies have a great deal of information about New York's early African population. The Schomburg is a wonderful source of information, but many people do not realize that there are other places where historical documentation of this nature exists. Setting up communications between such organizations and the OPEI would greatly enhance the accessibility of this information. It would also let the public know that information on "African American" history can be found in the same organizations that document "American" history and not always separate from the general scope of the subject. After all, African Americans were here well before the Declaration of Independence for example.

Also, the connection between the Native Americans and the African Americans should be explored. For example, study of early settlements from Maine to

(cont. on page 17)

VOICES OF OLD NEW YORK

Emilyn L. Brown

In the turbulent decades following the Civil War, African Americans paid a high price for being free. Marred by widespread discrimination, political censure and mob violence, the quality of freedom was continually challenged by the nation's leading African American journalists. At the forefront of the battle for more than fifty years, was T. Thomas Fortune, a self-described thinker and agitator known for his uncompromising stand against bigotry. A retrospective look at his tireless campaign against racism leaves little doubt concerning his belated recognition as the "Father of the Black Power Movement."

Timothy Fortune was one of 5 children born in slavery to Emanuel and Sara Jane Fortune of Marianna, Florida. By age 12 he'd known both the joy of freedom as well as its darker side: night raids, burning crosses, and lynchings, stark symbols of hate that signalled the rise of the Klu Klux Klan. Fleeing to Jacksonville soon after freedom, the Fortunes eventually found a greater degree of peace and prosperity. Under Republican reign, Emanuel Fortune even became an elected city official who taught his son the mechanics of organized political power. From a young age Timothy worked as a page in the senate, a secretary to Congressman Josiah T. Walls, as a clerk at the Jacksonville post office, and as a printer's assistant for several Jacksonville newspapers.

Despite a lack of formal education in his youth, Fortune enrolled at Howard University to study law. His educational pursuits might have led to a career as a politician had it not been for financial difficulties. After marriage and a brief stint as a teacher in Jacksonville, Fortune, like countless other African Americans, migrated to Manhattan. In 1879 he found work as a printer in the competitive world of journalism. When the opportunity arose to salvage a financially strapped newspaper called the *Rumor,* Fortune, along with several partners, leaped at the chance, renaming the paper the *New York Globe.* Their moderate success forestalled bankruptcy until 1884, but by then Fortune had already established himself as a courageous and incisive writer and within a short time acquired his own newspaper which he called the *New York Freeman.*

As publisher, editor and printer, Fortune often provoked the anger of city officials and others through his militant tone. Although political pressure was brought to bear on his editorial policies, it was mounting debts that ultimately caused him to relinquish control of the paper to his brother Emanuel Jr. Renamed *The New York Age,* Emanuel tended to the paper's daily operations until his untimely death in 1889, while Fortune continued to write for the *New York Evening Sun* and other local periodicals. Following his brother's death in 1889, Fortune returned to the helm of the newspaper, remaining its controversial and celebrated publisher for more than twenty-eight years.

A showcase for culture, history and progressive political ideas, Fortune addressed African American concerns north and south, advancing unity and racial pride. His theme and use of the term Afro-American in the *New York Age* editorials, for instance, focused on bridging political power between Africans in America and abroad, a strategy that emphasized collective strength over individual plight. What appeared to be alarming to some readers however, was Fortune's insistence on armed self-defense, a response directed toward the growing violence across the country. His opinions, while rallying

T. THOMAS FORTUNE 1856 - 1928

many African Americans, generated detractors of both races as well. But few critics could refute the bitter harvest of lynchings and beatings that characterized late 19th century America. Racial violence reached a peak in 1899, as more than 1,500 African Americans were savagely killed, often in the presence of huge, enthusiastic crowds. In the following year, one of New York's most severe riots was sparked by an altercation between an African American and a plain-clothes officer. At a rally held in Brooklyn, Fortune cautioned those in attendance:

> You must organize and keep your powder dry and be ready to demand an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, for there is coming a great crisis for the negro in this country in which much blood may be shed...If the law can afford us no protection then we should protect ourselves, and if need be die in the defense of our rights as citizens...There can be no compromise in a life and death struggle... (cont. on page 18)

FIVE POINTS - From The Ground Up

Tobacco Pipes Part I

Paul Reckner,
Introduction by
Rebecca Yamin

"Tell me what you smoke and I will tell you who you are." Journal Pour Rire, 1851

The following is the first in a series of articles about the artifacts recovered on the Five Points site, Courthouse Block, an area bounded by Worth Street on the north, Park Row on the the east, Pearl Street on the south, and the New York County Courthouse on the west. The new federal courthouse, at 600 Pearl Street stands on a parcel that was part of the historic Five Points, a notorious neighborhood in New York City history that was infamous for overcrowded, impoverished living conditions and a colorful street life.

We know that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, many Africans lived at the Points along with European Americans, and that as the century progressed, the area became a haven for immigrants, especially the Irish. We don't yet know exactly whose belongings were deposited in the abandoned backyard features (holes in the ground originally used for water collection or sewage disposal) that were excavated in 1991.

As we analyze the artifacts in the Foley Square Laboratory, we ask ourselves all kinds of questions: What were the people like who used these throw them out? Did they choose the things they used because they liked them or was it all they could afford? Did they choose to own things that communicated their ethnic identity? Were they trying to be like other New Yorkers or were they trying to be different? How did they express their personal identity as well as their sense of belonging to groups? Artifact analysis is a long and tedious process, but it is a way to gain insight into the lives of people who are not well covered in history books. It is a way to get at the past "from the ground up."

The clay tobacco pipes found at Five Points were manufactured, shipped, sold, purchased, smoked, and eventually thrown away by individuals and groups who carried out life in simple, ordinary everyday fashion. Of all the implements used in smoking, clay pipes are the most common and best preserved in the archaeological record. The clay from which they were made may shatter, unlike metal, which corrodes, and unlike materials like bone, wood, paper and tobacco, which decompose, ceramics survive quite well underground.

Pipes are often studied by archaeologists because they are especially revealing about the way people expressed their ethnicity, nationality, and individuality. They were (and still are) common, everyday objects which virtually anyone could afford and almost everyone used. Yet pipes were made in such a wide range of sizes, shapes, and decorative styles that smokers were able to exercise personal choice. However, a pipe is not the same without tobacco in the bowl.

The way our nineteenth century New Yorkers used their pipes is partly the result of the long history of tobacco, and in order to better understand pipes, archaeologists need to be familiar with the origins of tobacco and the impact that various cultures and eras have had on the nature of smoking.

Tobacco is native to the Americas and the practices of snuffing, chewing and smoking were observed by European explorers as they travelled the continents. "Tobago" was the rough transcription of the Carib word for the "Y" - shaped tube which Caribbean natives used in taking a tobacco-like mixture. This practice, probably witnessed by Spanish explorers in that region and was documented. The transcription was then recorded and later entered European vocabularies by way of Spain. There are Aztec paintings depicting figures puffing on smoking tubes, probably the reed-encased tobacco cigarettes reported by one of Cortez's men. Cuban natives were seen smoking rolled broad-leaf tobacco, and it has been suggested that the native term "zikar" gave the Spanish their "cigarro."

The pipe phenomena was expanded as French and English explorers in eastern North America were quickly exposed to the practice of pipe smoking.

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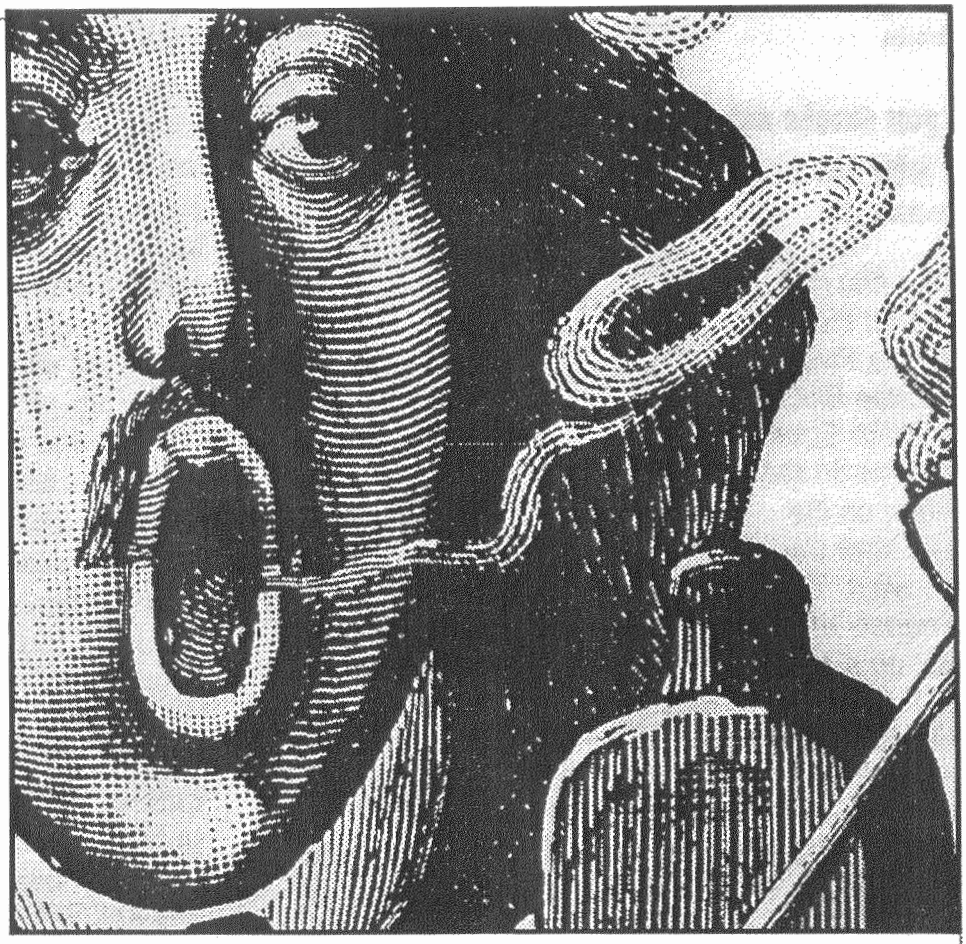
Tobacco Pipes
(Continued from page 9)



Cartier described early pipes as hollow pieces of stone or wood being used by natives in the region of the St. Lawrence in 1534. The Dutch and English clay pipes of the sixteenth century were modeled from these pipes. From these, descended the pipes found at Five Points.

The response to smoking in Europe was largely negative in the early years of the phenomena. A story from Bristol, England, relates that a sailor "did walk in the streets emitting smoke from his nostrils" and was driven off by frightened locals. Officially, James I let fly his famous *Counterblaste to Tobacco* in 1603, in which he referred to the practice as a "vile and stinking custome." Many monarchs imposed heavy import taxes on tobacco products, ostensibly to discourage its use, but also to reap a profit from the general demand for good leaf.

Smoking was a capital offense at various times in Turkey, Persia and India. By 1642, Urban VIII felt the need to issue a Papal Bull prohibiting the use of all forms of tobacco in church. Frederick William I of Prussia, the "smoking king," and his "Tobacco Parliament" stood in flagrant contrast to prevailing negative sentiments. His informal political gatherings were famous (perhaps infamous) for the great quantities of tobacco and beer offered up by the host.

The consensus changed over time, and smoking was not only acceptable, it was thought to actively improve the smoker's health. Numerous scientific tracts were written in this period which proclaimed the positive medicinal effects of tobacco in all its forms. The germ theories in this time period held that disease was brought on when people were exposed to miasmas -- clouds of poisonous vapor emanating from rotting garbage. Smoking was seen as a way to cleanse the body and drive off these noxious clouds. It is possible that this idea of tobacco as medicine, grew out of the reports of early explorers in the Americas, who saw tobacco being used in traditional healing rituals.

It is often forgotten that at this time, partly for the reason men tioned above, it was common for both men and women to use tobacco. However, certain ways of using tobacco inappropriate for men and women of 'quality'. For example, part of the Victorian code of civil behavior considered to be offensive and a mark of the lower classes. Workers were also allowed to smoke on the job and this in part led to the popularity of shorter stemmed pipes.

The increased demand for tobacco on a global scale sparked the development of a vast network of inter-related industries. Tobacco plantations in the Americas sprung up and untold acres of New World soil were exhausted by over-cultivation of the extractive plant. The labor-intensive nature of tobacco farming is

(cont. on page 21)

In Tribute

Noel W. Pointer, Sr.

December 26, 1954 - December 19, 1994

Dear Friends:

Noel Pointer's untimely death has left a rich legacy unfinished. Often we hear accolades of brilliance and greatness attributed to people. But what defines this greatness? I've heard it said that one's greatness is measured by what they inspire others to do. If this is true, Noel's "greatness" is evidenced in the out-pouring of testimonials to his work and personal influence in the lives of so many. I listen with deep respect to the clear, specific reflections of him that sound more like the accomplishments of five men rather than one.

His work has its own place and momentum. Now, it is our desire to companion its life so that old friends will encounter more of his vast body of work, and new friends may meet and experience the seemingly boundless scope of this great man. This mission will be developed and refined through the establishment of ***The Noel Pointer Foundation.***

We invite you to join us in helping fulfill Noel's dreams and firmly establish his legacy of musical brilliance, community service and spiritual restoration.

Respectfully Submitted By His Wife,

Chinita Pointer

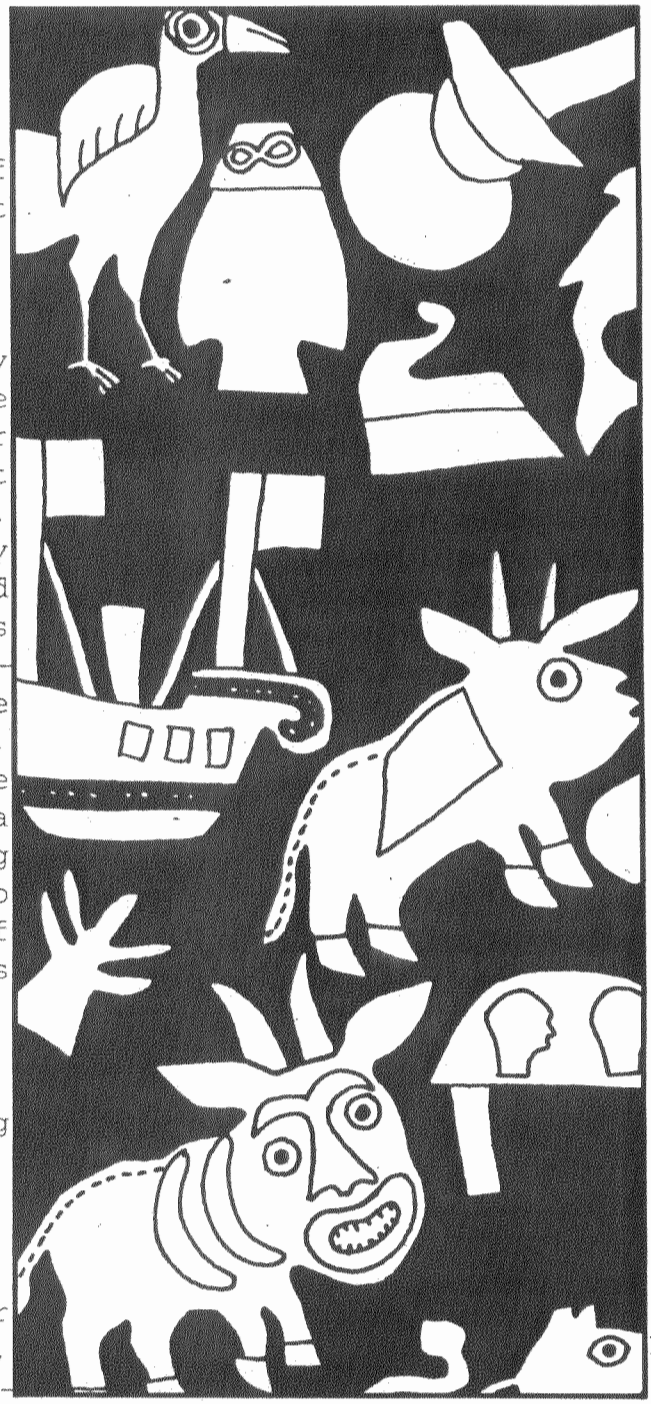
CLUES FOR A DIGGABLE PLANET

cynthia r. copeland

Ever ask yourself what is time? I mean really, WHAT IS TIME? Is it a season; a measured period in which an activity, process or something takes place? Maybe it's a period of history or study or a moment. Depending upon with whom you speak, time can be any or all of those things and more. But what you might really want to know is; whatever time is, can it be measured?

Some say yes, some say no. When we look at the hands on a clock or watch, we certainly think that we see time ticking away. Especially when anxiously awaiting the weekend and suddenly, the clock strikes 3:00 pm on a Friday afternoon. What about when we look at a calendar. Months, weeks, days and years are written down on paper as a reminder that time is passing on and that we have to move forward. But what if we want to move backwards in time, can that be done.

If you ask me, I'd have to say absolutely positively yes! How can this amazing feat be done one might wonder? Well, have you ever heard of a time capsule? By definition, a time capsule is a container that holds historical records, artifacts or things that represent a current culture(s). Once full, the container or "time capsule" gets deposited somewhere for discovery and archaeological study in the future. If you haven't thought about this idea, perhaps you will now for this is a "coolacious" way of leaving a part of you behind.



Think about it. If you want to find out about the way people have lived over time, you have to do research. Sometimes you go to the library and do documentary research only. That would involve looking at books, encyclopedias, old newspapers and magazines, maps, photographs, drawings and other things of this type. If you became soooo involved in the research that you couldn't get enough, you might want to see something visual, or real concrete evidence of your historical cultural interest project. At this point, perhaps you would go off to a museum of history or anthropological studies. There displayed inside the glass cabinets you might see artifacts that give you more than a glimpse of life from different past cultures. An artifact is an object, made by humans, that to anyone studying it, shows off the workmanship and usefulness of the object to the people who've used it. A trip to the museum is an excel lent resource or way to find out more about a topic of study.

While gazing at the artifacts through the display cabinets at the museum, you may find yourself asking questions like "Who found that artifact?", "Where did that artifact come from?" or "Why was there any interest in this object in the first place?"

(cont. on page 14)

Letters to the Editor
(cont. from page 2)

Dear Mr. Brown,

We at the Office of Public Education and Interpretation of the African Burial Ground (OPEI), share your disappointment and frustration of this verbal rejection of an African Burial Ground Commemorative Stamp. We also look forward to being informed of the reason(s) for this rejection when you have been given the particulars by the U.S. Postmaster General.

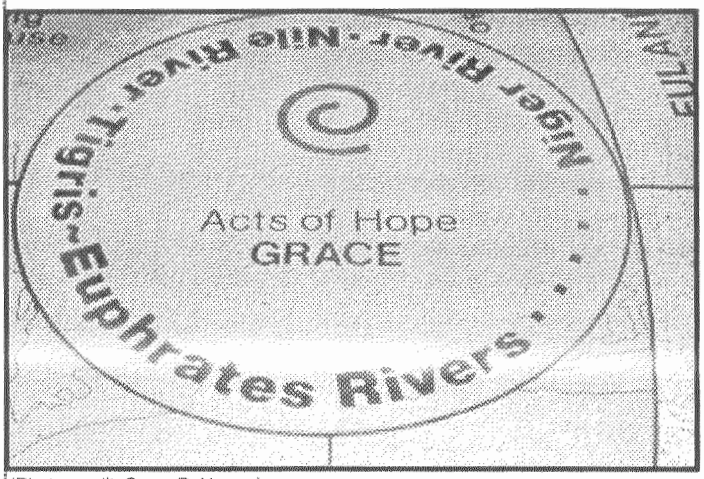
We will continue to assist your dedicated efforts to collect additional signatures to again re-submit to the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC), or indeed to the Posmaster General directly. The stamp campaign deadline, at your suggestion, is extended to **June 30, 1995.** This will mark one year since the beginning of the campaign to collect signatures.

We are hopeful that our readers and supporters of the African Burial Ground Project will increase and renew their efforts to gather and submit additional signatures in this historic effort to recognize, at a national and international level, the achievements and contributions of the unnamed and unrecognized Africans who lived and died in 18th century New York City.

Sherrill D. Wilson
Director OPEI

African Burial Ground Update
(cont. from page 2)

Details of the cosmogram, *The New Ring Shout*, installed at 290 Broadway. Designed by a collaborative team consisting of sculptor Houston Conwill, architect Joseph DePace and poet Estella Conwill Majozo, the work blends African tradition, geographical signposts and historical quotations.



(Photo credit: Steve B. Harper)

African Religions In America
(continued from page 3)

Although there is a paucity of information on the initial reactions and thoughts of enslaved Africans aboard the slave ships, it is possible to obtain a notion of their reactions from the sketchy accounts of African-born slaves, like Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vassa), who lived to recount their stories of enslavement. Olaudah was a member of the Ibo nation. Seven months after surviving his kidnapping and traversing hundreds of miles, he arrived at the sea coast and was sold to European slave traders. When, in amazement, he asked the other captured Africans on the ship to explain how the European slavers were able to start and stop their ship at will, he was told "that there was cloth put upon the masts by the help of the ropes...and then the vessel went on; and the white men had some spell or magic they put in the water, when they liked, in order to stop the vessel" {Gates 1987:34}. This explanation reveals that Olaudah shared with the other Africans a belief in magic. As John Mbiti explains, "magic is part of the [traditional African] religious background, and it is not easy to separate the two....Magic belongs to the religious mentality of African peoples" {Mbiti: 9}. Although Olaudah was constantly fearful and anxious about his fate at the hands of the Europeans, he was frequently consoled in a similar manner by the other Africans on the slave ship who made "the inconceivable scene of horror" aboard the ship more tolerable by explaining the unfamiliar or strange through reference to common elements and a familiar belief system which the Africans shared.

In all probability most Africans imported into the American colonies in the seventeenth and eighteenth century experienced similar amazements as Olaudah Equiano. Olaudah's account of his voyage to the New World indicates that the Africans who reached the New World did not amount to a unified group, but, in fact, were a heterogeneous crowd. While the Africans aboard the slave ships shared some basic assumptions and expectations about the way the world functions phenomenologically, the aggregate enslaved masses on these ships did not constitute a permanent "community." However, whatever the extent to which the enslaved Africans of differing groups exchanged religious beliefs, ritual assistance and knowledge during the "Middle Passage," such religious exchanges marked the initial phases of the formation of a nascent religious system among the people of the African Diaspora {Mintz & Price 1992:42, 44-46}. Shared assumptions and beliefs served as a catalyst in the processes by which Africans from diverse societies were later able to forge a new religion that would provide the glue for African unity in America and aid in establishing the foundations of national conscious {Mintz & Price: 18-22}.

(cont. on page 15)

Clues for a Diggable Planet (continued from page 12)

Archaeologists, anthropologists and people with collections who sometimes lend their interesting collections about the culture of different peoples to museums are some of the people responsible for an artifacts' existence. It's quite natural to be curious about things. So, it's quite natural to want to collect things about people. Today we are finding out about people, animals and things that lived hundreds and thousands of years ago. Isn't it possible that the trend will continue. Do you think that 100 years from now, people will want to study things about our culture?

Well, if you answered yes, why not leave some clues. Leave a piece of you behind that you feel is important and would tell people a lot about you. What you choose to leave behind will offer a wide variety of perspectives or ways for future generations to examine the habits and ways of our culture. Hard items like glass, ceramic and plastic survive quite well. Organic material, or living matter such as bone, wood, paper, textile and fiber hang around for a while, but eventually, decompose or disintegrate. Metal, once in contact with earth's natural properties will corrode, and clay can shatter into tiny sherds or pieces, leaving a trace of its existence. S O CHOOSE YOUR ITEMS WISELY my culture-creatures.

Your time capsule will be easy to make. All you have to do is seal an object or two in a container with a lid, like a glass jar or a metal coffee can, and place it somewhere ... anywhere that can be resealed or recovered. Try digging a hole in the ground. If you're fortunate enough to live in a private house, A S K YOUR PARENTS if there's an area in your home where you can knock out a hole in the wall and reseal it. Or maybe there's a loose floorboard that you can lift up and place your item beneath. There are plenty of inventive spaces available. The world is one big back yard and you can help future discoverers piece together the puzzle of life on earth in the 1990s and the 2000s by leaving tidbits behind.

Digging up and studying the remains from previous cultures is a great way to learn about and understand the past. It's also a good way to provide visions of the future. Your time capsule can be a creative and fun way to celebrate and preserve our diverse cultural heritage in New York City and beyond.

ARE YOU ON OUR MAILING LIST?

Please submit names and/or corrections to OPEI, 6 World Trade Center, Room 239 New York, NY 10048

African Religions In America (Continued from page 13)

The "Middle Passage," then was not simply a culturally effacing experience, but "a pathway or channel between [African] traditions and what [was later] evolved on new soil" {Mintz & Price: 6-7}.

In Manhattan, as elsewhere, the process of religious synthesis which transformed the enslaved Africans into "a unified religious community" depended in part upon the opportunities the enslaved Africans had to contrive and maintain their own way of life. Also, the power wielded by the ruling Europeans heavily influenced the ways in which religious continuities from Africa were maintained, as well as the manner in which traditional African religions were transformed or revised. The enslaved Africans' attempt to create a religion, which would prove responsive to their daily needs under the limiting conditions that slavery imposed upon them, was indubitably connected to the various social mechanisms established by the ruling European colonial power to further its interest while, in turn, subjugating the Africans. Since New York's slave history encompassed the domination of two different colonial powers, the Dutch and the English, an adequate discussion of the factors inducing religious synthesis must begin with a careful examination of the opportunities available to the Africans.On the one hand, exposure to European religions and the nature of contact between Africans and Europeans must be examined; on the other hand, the nature of the contact among different African groups must also be analyzed under each European hegemony.

The inaugural shipment of the eleven company-imported enslaved Africans into Dutch Manhattan occurred in 1626 as a means of solving the fledgling Dutch colony's labor shortage problem. The Company preferred white servants; however, they were neither being shipped nor remaining in satisfactory numbers. The stable, prosperous life of the Netherlands was too attractive to Dutch burghers and farmers for them to venture on the uncertain and harsh prospects offered by immigration to the colony. Thus, the eleven Africans were put to work as agricultural laborers on company farms and on the construction of public buildings, roads and military works for which free labor could not be obtained.

The Dutch colonial officials did not prevent Africans from receiving the "Word of God" in their churches. On the contrary, they encouraged the enslaved Africans to learn Dutch and convert to the established Dutch Reformed Church. However, the Dutch colonial pastors and clergymen were not successful in converting the Africans. Many white settlers wondered about the implications of conversion for the enslaved African's status. Irrespective of their decision on conversion and the state of the slaves, the Dutch Reformed Church's specific rules and regulations on baptism seriously hindered missionary work among the Africans. Generally, only children of communicant members were baptized into the Church. In addition, the Church specified that adults could not be baptized until they were prepared to become "full" communicant members. For example, the Classis of Brazil decided in 1637 that "children of unbaptized Brazilians and Negroes should not be baptized until their parents had been instructed in the true Christian Religion and received baptism" {De Jong, 1971:432}. The Classis of Amsterdam later declared in 1661 that

> no one, who is an adult, is [to be] admitted to baptism without previous confession of his faith. Accordingly the adult Negroes and Indians must also be previous--ly instructed and make confession of their faith before Holy Baptism may be administered to them. As to their children, the Classis answers, that as long as the parents are actually heathen....the children may not be baptized, unless the parents pass over to Christianity, and abandon heathenism.
> {Corwin, DeJong}.

This custom was immensely significant for the conversion of Africans, because if the leaders of the Dutch Church were not satisfied with administering some form of rudimentary instruction to prospective converts sufficient for baptized membership and instead required that prospective converts appear before the dominie and the Consistory to demonstrate a good comprehension of the basic beliefs of the Dutch Reformed Church, then there were obviously many Africans, who, failing to pass such stringent requirements, were not baptized {De Jong:43}.

Part II continues in the next issue of Update

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African American Beginnings

Dr. Sherrill D. Wilson
(Part 2 of 3)

The British brand of slavery differed from the Dutch in many respects. As early as 1684, twenty years after the British takeover in 1664, Africans and Natives (Indians) had curfews, were forbidden from congregating in public places in groups of more than four, or to bear arms. Trade with slaves without the written permission of the owner was also forbidden. In 1686 Africans and Natives were also restricted from working on the Weighouse Bridge or at the Markethouse (Stokes 1915-28).

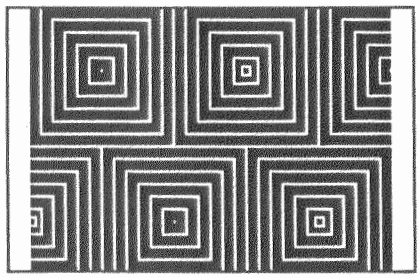
In 1702 New York Assembly passed laws that prohibited the assembly of more than three slaves or Natives. Offenders were punished by public flogging. The law also dictated that slaves could be punished for any crime at the discretion of their masters. Slaves found guilty of striking Christians (whites), were jailed from up to fourteen days, and made to suffer corporeal punishment, not extending to life or member (Zilversmith 1967).

In order to curb the so-called heathen behavior of the African slaves a school of Catechism was opened by Frenchman Elias Neau. The school was run out of Trinity Church. The church had been established in 1697. In that same year Trinity had declared that Africans would not be buried in the burial ground of the church. Prior to 1697 Trinity's churchyard had been the City's public burial ground where all New Yorkers, including Africans, had been buried. While some Blacks were members of white churches, this membership was one of second class citizenship in worship as in life. Concern for Black members was not a priority or even a consideration for many churches. The burials of Africans was as regulated as the other aspects of their lives.

According to the Minutes of the Common Council of New York City in addition to forbidding African and Native burials within the City limits (Vol.1:85-86) Africans in 1722 had to restrict the times at which they could inter their dead (Vol.III:286), and limit the number of mourners at interment services to twelve in 1731 (Vol.IV:88).

The Slave Catechism school operated for eight years until it was closed down during the interrogations of it's students after the slave revolt of 1712. Many blamed the school itself for the insurrection. As many as 100-250 students attended the school. Despite the protests of the students, the school was closed until all students could be questioned and exonerated. The school was reopened and still functioning at the death of its founder Neau in 1722 (Bennett 1966; Payne 1923; Ploski 1971).

Some historians of the British colonial period have speculated that it was the harsh treatment of the British brand of slavery that resulted in the violent slave revolt in 1712. The slave revolt was an upheaval that lasted for



Wooden keg carving, lower Congo
© 1971 Geoffrey Williams

fourteen days, from April 7th to April 21st would result in additional restrictions for Africans and Natives. During the revolt houses were burned, nine whites were killed and twenty one blacks were executed at the end. It was reported that six others committed suicide (Bennett 1966; Ploski 1971; Stokes 1915-28).

The slave revolt and the so-called slave conspiracy of 1741 emphasized the growing fear that the whites had of its expanding slave population. More restrictive slave codes were enacted to quell any further uprisings. The slave codes made the following provisions: that free blacks be severely punished for aiding runaways, free Africans were barred from owning property, land or houses, and the most fatal blow was that any New York slave master who desired to free a slave had to post two bonds of at least 200 pounds per year to guarantee that freed slaves would not become financial burdens to the city (Zilversmith 1967). Historian Ira Berlin notes of the slave revolt of 1712:

> Significantly, Africans, many of whom did not yet speak English and still carried tribal names, composed the majority of the participants in the New York slave insurrection of 1712 (1968:44)

Berlin further argues that it was the

> African influence upon a culturally Euro-African group of African Americans that caused a greater identification with Africa, and things Africans, thereby dissatisfaction with the lot of slaves in British-ruled eighteenth century New York City (Berlin 1968).

From 1730 until the post revolutionary war period, similarly harsh laws were enacted to further restrict, control and punish New York's black and native population. Even under these strict laws it was clear that a fear of the African and Native populations existed in the minds of New York whites. The so-called Slave Conspiracy of 1741 is believed to have been a product of that fear rather than any real threat. During the conspiracy mysterious fires erupted throughout the city causing some whites to leave. This plot resulted in the execution of thirty-one slaves by burning and hanging. Seventy one slaves were sold outside the colony (Bennett 1966; Horsemanden 1744; Stokes 1915-28).

The eighteenth century New York African population reached its peak in 1746 at 20.8% of the total population. Prior to 1756 the term "slave" was used to describe both slaves and free African Americans (Davis 1978; Greene & Harrington 1942) Some speculate that it was the greed of the British in constantly increasing the slave population that caused all of the troubles with slave uprisings (Ottley 1943). It was not until after the Revolutionary War that 49% of New York's African population was free and 51% enslaved.

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African American Beginnings
(Continued from page 16)

During the period from 1712 to the Revolutionary War, "the economic and social progress of the Negroes in New York was practically at a standstill" notes Aaron Payne. He further adds: "This was due to the harsh measures enacted for the first time in 1712, and thereafter enacted in 1730 and again in 1753, which definitely prohibited Negroes from holding land, and discouraged them even in the acquisition of personal property" (1923:28).

The American Revolutionary War emphasized the incompatibility of slavery within the rebelling colonies. Africans fought on both sides of the revolutionary conflict. The promise of freedom was offered to runaway slaves as enticement to fight on the side of British loyalists at the beginning of the war. The colonists on the other hand did not actively solicit black participation until 1781, two years before the treaties were signed ending the war in 1783 (Litwack 1961; Norton 1966).

Historian Leon Higgenbotham describes what occurred as a strategy employed by the British to secure black men as soldiers for the loyalist cause:

> The British drove a wedge between the American masters and their slaves by treating the slaves as neutrals in conflict. For example, in raids against Americans in several New York towns, slaves were not harmed unless they fought against the British. This was made a standard policy by Sir Henry Clinton, the British Commander-In-Chief (1978:136).

When the war ended promises granting freedom were kept by the British and American colonists in 1785. The masters of slaves who fought on both sides were financially compensated for the lost of their slaves. In New York, even after the war the political and civil rights of Africans were according to Higgenbotham, "severely limited." He elaborates: "...blacks could not vote nor could they hold public office. Social restrictions were also placed on blacks — interracial marriage with whites was banned and even precluded blacks from testifying against whites in any court in the state" (1978:139). Some of the Africans who fought for the Loyalists departed New York shores with the British during the evacuation headed for British colonial territories, the West Indies and England (Norton 1966).

While African New Yorkers did not live apart from the white population, in death however, they were designated a separate place for burials. A five and a half to six acre area near today's City Hall was set apart, one mile from the city limits for the interment of Africans enslaved and free. Beginning in 1697 when Trinity Church received a royal charter from the King of England, the church deemed that Africans would no longer be buried in Trinity's burial ground, at today's Wall Street and Broadway. The "Negroes Burying/Burial Ground," as it was called, is believed to have served as such from approximately 1712 through 1794.

(cont. on page 22)

Community Voices
(Continued from page 7)

Florida will reveal large pockets of these two groups and how closely their histories intertwine, i.e. settlements off the coast of Georgia and those at Hilton Head. Therefore, researching Native American history will reveal information on African American history as well.

Mr. David Hall,
Project Manager for HRA, Poster Project:
Parents need to get more involved with what their children are being taught in the schools. They need to spend more time investigating just what their children are learning. Getting involved in parent-teacher associations, for example, would help greatly in letting the educators know what parents feel are important for their children to learn. Becoming involved in parent associations would also help give parents an opportunity to share their interests with those who set up the curriculum like the principals and other school board administrators. Black history is part of American history and should be included within the framework of what is being taught.

Mr. Hapte Selassie,
Producer WBAI Radio, New York City:
The first question we should ask is how can the history of New York City be complete without this information? The African presence in New York City may not have been all pleasant when we consider those who were enslaved, but nevertheless, these individuals made great contributions to the development of this great city. Our churches need to become more involved in dispersing information about our history. Preachers should include information like that of the ABG into their sermons. Sometimes we depend on the "systems" to tell our story. It is time that we begin to tell our own story in its entirety. Whatever the avenue, we should explore ways to disseminate information amongst ourselves. Then we can broadcast this information to all just as all have been told of the Holocaust. Lastly, include this information in the social studies curriculum and make sure the students are tested on this material. The Regents and City-wide examinations should have questions which students must answer in order to pass to the next level including graduation. If this information is part of a required curriculum it cannot be glossed over or pushed to the side.

DID YOU KNOW... The cover page logo is adapted from an Akan goldweight, one of many types commonly used in West Africa.

This graphic is one of many designs created by Kamal Al-Mansour, publisher of Afro- Link Software in Los Angeles, CA. Additional Afro-Link graphics appear on pages 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 13, 16 and 17, part of a three volume series containing Afrocentric artwork, cultural icons, historical figures and more. ***To order or obtain further information call/fax: 213.730.0653***

Voices of Old New York
(cont. from page 8)

Beyond rhetoric, Fortune wanted a formal organization that would offer legal protection to besieged African Americans. This same theme had inspired his earlier organizing efforts, resulting in the formation of the Afro American League in forty cities from 1887 to 1889. Now, more than a decade later, faced with escalating violence, the Citizens Protective League was established. At a mass meeting held at Carnegie Hall on September 12th, sufficient funds were raised to initiate an investigation, but efforts of the League ran into a stumbling block when testimony by African Americans was routinely discredited by the police and city officials.

Possibly frustrated by New York City's politics, Fortune seemed to turn away from direct involvement in organizing a short time later. Instead, he became more vocal in his support of Booker T. Washington's self-help agenda, although shunning his policies of compromise. His shift may have also simply been a question of friendship; few knew for example, that Fortune was largely responsible for writing Washington's autobiography. But his stand was roundly criticized by some in the African American community who viewed his position as a sell out, and soon rumors concerning his financial dependence on Washington began to circulate. In 1907, those rumors came to a head as Washington, a long- time critic of Fortune's militancy, secretly gained control of *The New York Age*, becoming its principal stockholder. Hopelessly ensnared in debt, and set adrift by former colleagues, Fortune was forced to step down as publisher of the newspaper he had borne through years of political infighting.

In what could be described as the darkest period of his life, estrangement from journalism, marital discord, as well as reported bouts with alcohol, led to a nervous breakdown. For three years Fortune remained unemployed, unable to return to his profession until 1910. Augmenting a meager income gained from writing articles for the *Philadelphia Tribune*, *The Amsterdam News*, *The Colored American Review, The Washington Sun,* and *The New York Age*, with a few speaking engagements,his uphill battle to survive even led to his working for a time with the New Jersey Negro Welfare Bureau, assisting southern Blacks in their migration to the north.

Fortune's career regained momentum during the Harlem Renaissance, with past grievances either forgotten or resolved. Serving as editor of Marcus Garvey's UNIA periodicals, *The Negro Times* and The *Negro World*, he rode the crest of renewed race pride, self-help, and unity, although he stated privately on more than one occasion that African Americans should remain in America. Consistent with the goals that characterized his life-long outlook, Fortune's support of Garvey's movement, like so many others, was his final effort in a long career of racial uplift.

T. Thomas Fortune's journey from enslavement ended at the age of 72 when he succumbed to heart disease. In the decades after his death, generations of activists continued to gather strength from his perspectives, and courage from his motto, "The Negro wants engraved on his heart I will not retreat, I will not yield, I will be heard."

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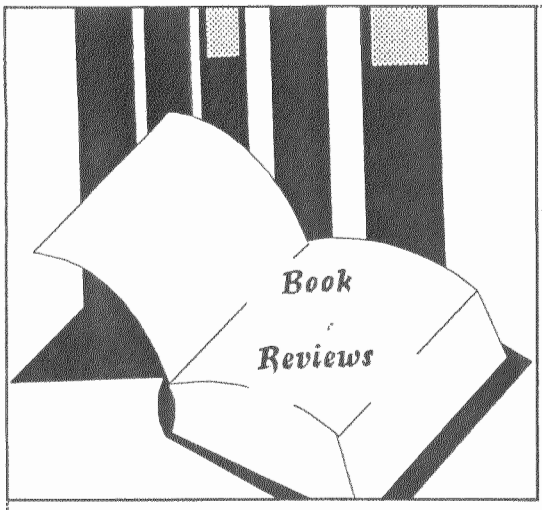
OPEI is currently accepting applications for internships. Students interested in working during the summer months should forward resumes along with a cover letter stating their goals to Dr. Sherrill D. Wilson, Director c/o OPEI.



Book: Ziggy and the Black Dinosaurs
Author: Sharon Draper
Publisher: Just Us Books,
Reviewer: Cynthia R. Copeland

A delightful story about the adventures of four young boys during their summer vacation in Ohio. In search of an activity to release their boredom, Ziggy, RaShawn, Rico and Jerome form a "secret club" to investigate local situations in the "FBI" style.

They call themselves the Black Dinosaurs because a) it's a cool name and b) they'll probably dig in the ground as they search for clues that may help them understand their past. But boy do they quake-in-their boots when they stumble upon the human bones found in a lot that was once a colonial burial ground for Africans and a colorful but somewhat scary local resident who wants to protect the bones.

BOOKS OF INTEREST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Games of Africa.
Five of Africa's traditional games with full illustrations and historical background

Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing.
An illustrated text explaining the African American National Anthem.

Meet Addy.
The first in a series about proud and courageous Addy Walker, an African American girl in the old South.

Everyday People.
A salute to the everyday people who played an important role in the civil rights movement.

Book: Long Hammering
Author: Prof. Williams-Myers
Publisher: Africa World Press
Reviewer: Emilyn L. Brown

From the beginning, Professor A.J. Williams-Myers offers a persuasive argument for researching African history in New York State: "When Africans were first brought to the region," he writes, " they were not intended to become permanent, long-range residents. They were to be temporary sojourners in what would eventually become a region designated for whites. Africans were to observe, learn and serve. In due time they were expected to die out because of their small number or to be absorbed by the general white population." Fortunately, those intentions gave way to a persistent and creative way of survival forged over three centuries.

A collection of articles previously published in *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* from 1983 to 1988, and supplemented by new material, *Long Hammering* is organized into eleven chapters ranging from America's venture into the slave trade to the Reconstruction era. The final chapter serves as a field guide for historic sites mentioned in the text.

Professor Williams-Myers offers extensive details to support his text, weaving factual information from wills, birth, death and war records, manumission papers and bills-of-sale for enslaved Africans into a vibrant social history. According to his estimates, some 6,800 Africans entered various regions of New York State in the decades prior to America's War of Independence. Shipped from Cuba, Santo Domingo, Curacao, Brazil and the Guinea Coast of Africa. Enslaved Africans were seldom mentioned by travelers and grossly and deliberately undercounted in early state census reports. Yet, in their assigned tasks as farmers, blacksmiths, bricklayers, millworkers, craftsmen and carpenters, Africans were instrumental in settling New York's "untamed" regions for the Dutch and British. As early as 1660, Africans were used in the wars against the Esopus Indians in the vicinity of New Paltz and Kingston. Ironically, it was this same Native population that subsequently provided a safe haven for enslaved runaways, their interaction producing "Black and White Esopus."

Long Hammering
(Continued from page 19)

Through the author's historic anecdotes readers are introduced to many heroic deeds performed by members of New York's early African community. Examples provided by the author illustrate how pivotal Africans were in every aspect of colonial life. For instance, the capture of Stony Point at the height of the Revolutionary War. In 1779 Pompey Lamb, an enslaved African, crossed enemy lines to sell fruit to British soldiers. After gaining access to the British password, it was used by American forces that included Pompey and a large number of Africans, to overrun the fort.

Professor Williams-Myer's exacting eye for detail offers wide ranging research that moves beyond the lens of slavery to include the establishment of early African communities, cultural expression, issues of miscegenation and the tragic consequences associated with insurrection. Having successfully achieved a "personalization of the African," *Long Hammering* provides valuable insight into New York's African past while establishing a critical theme of cultural empowerment for present and future generations.

Book: The Afro American in New York City, 1827-1860
Author: George Walker
Publisher: Garland Publishing, Inc.
Reviewer: Sherrill D. Wilson

George Walker's doctoral dissertation is just one in a yearly series entitled "Studies of African American History and Culture," edited by historian Graham Hodges of Colgate University and published by Garland Publishers.

Walker's work attempts to fill in the gaps of life and history for African Americans living in New York City during the 19th century, especially between 1827 and 1860. Walker confines his study to this period because it marks the emancipation period for Africans in New York City. Walker offers insights on the economic and social conditions, education, religious life, as well as suffrage, colonization, political affiliations and the emergence of the national Black press. Much of the material presented in this research was not public knowledge in 1975 when it was completed, and that is what makes it especially valuable. Walker draws on the wealth of resource materials of the period such as African American newspapers, speeches and addresses, census records and other unpublished manuscripts, etc. The 19th century, unlike the 17th and 18th centuries, provided a wealth of "first hand" materials from the viewpoint of African American New Yorkers themselves, and Walker makes good use of these materials in his research.

The one unfortunate note in this work is the tone of the manuscript. Walker repeatedly refers to the African Americans living in 19th century New York as "these people," perhaps an acceptable term to refer to African Americans in 1975, but in 1995 this term comes across as patronizing. Overall, however, this is a valuable work in terms of highlighting the concerns, numerous achievements and obstacles faced by African Americans in New York's emancipation period, prior to the Civil War.

The next issue of Update will provide a review of Rhoda Freeman's dissertation, The Free Negro in New York City In The Era Before the Civil War.

Women's History Month Celebration
Join us for a lunch time lecture/slide presentation by Dr. Sherrill D. Wilson on the "Good Works of African American Women. Wednesday, March 22 1995. 12:00 noon to 12:45.
Please call for reservations: 212.432.5707

BLACK WOMEN INVENTORS

It may be news to some, but the truth is...women have been inventing useful products for years.

Sarah Boone
Ironing Board
April 26, 1892

Mary B. Kenner
Bathroom Tissue Holder
Patented Oct. 19, 1982

Marie V. Brittan Brown
Home Security System
(TV Surveillance)
Dec. 2, 1969

Mary J. Reynolds
Hoisting/LoadingMechanism
April 20, 1920

Ruane Jeter
Digital Toaster
April 14, 1987

Madeline M. Turner
The Fruit Press
April 25, 1916

Tobacco Pipes

(continued from page 10)

cited as one of the driving forces behind the massive expansion of the African slave trade.

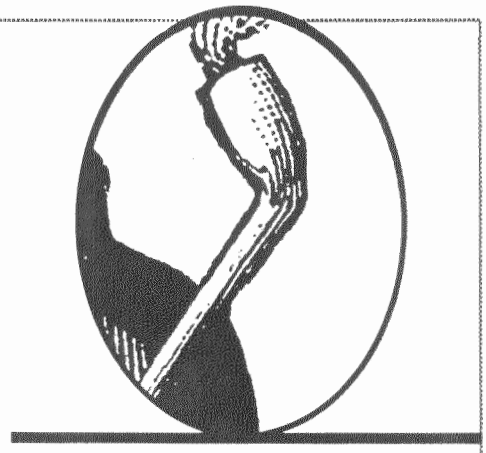
Factories opened to process the raw leaf into pipe and chewing tobacco, mills specialized in grinding tobacco into snuff, and craftsmen began producing snuff boxes, cigars, and, of course, clay tobacco pipes. Bristol in England was an early center for the production of clay pipes, as was the city of Gouda in Holland. Scotland was well known as a center for snuff-milling, and, later, Glasgow was a major clay pipe producing center. In the nineteenth century, the U.S. was producing huge volumes of chewing tobacco for the domestic market. Tobacco provided the impetus for world-wide social and economic change.

Chewing tobacco, or quid, was the most common method of chewing tobacco in America by the 1850s, though never very popular in Europe. Visitors to the U.S. often commented on the natives' offensive habit. Chaw, or chewing tobacco, reigned supreme until after World War I which hastened the rise of the cigarette. Some students of tobacco believe the practice of chewing began to wane in the late nineteenth century. The discontinuance of the practice can also be attributed to Victorian age values of cleanliness and civil behavior, and the increasing urbanization of America.

There was always a place to spit in backwoods America, but the city was another matter. Spittoons were one solution to that problem, and they are also the only major chewing tobacco-related objects which survive in the archaeological record.

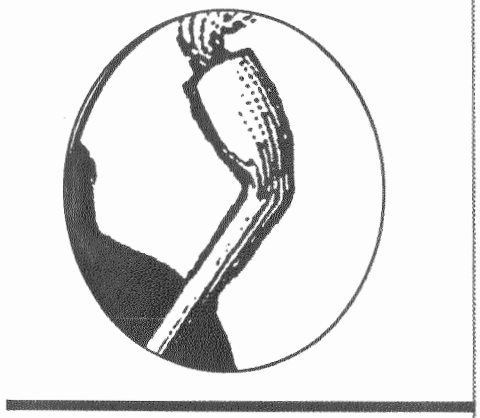
Long stemmed clay pipes, more common in earlier centuries, were joined by an increasing number of short stemmed clays in the nineteenth century.

Porcelain and Meerschaum pipes (principally from Germany), stub stemmed clay pipes, and wooden 'brier' pipes which closely resemble the pipes commonly smoked today also appeared on manufacturers' price lists in this period. Pipe bowls were carved and molded with more and more ornate designs: geometric patterns, slogans, and portraits of famous persons. The advertising potential of tobacco pipes began to be exploited, and company logos and political slogans started showing up on clay pipe bowls from the latter nineteenth century.



Recommended Reading:

Robert K. Heimann's bookTobacco & Americans (1960) is a fairly accurate and readable subject. By way of crediting the author and recommending his work, many details were drawn from this book. Also of interest is Tobacco in Colonial Virginia: "The Sovereign Remedy," by Herndon, (1957).



Part II continues in the Spring edition of UPDATE

African American Beginnings (continued from page 17)

By most accounts the "Negro Burying Ground" was being used as a final resting place for Africans, enslaved and free people by the 1712 slave revolt (Stokes 1915-1928, IV, Moore 1712/12 Valentine 1847). The first document which mentions the African Burial Ground is dated 1712/13, written by a military chaplain, Reverend John Sharpe. In *"Proposals for Erecting a School, Library and Chapel at New York,* Sharpe comments:

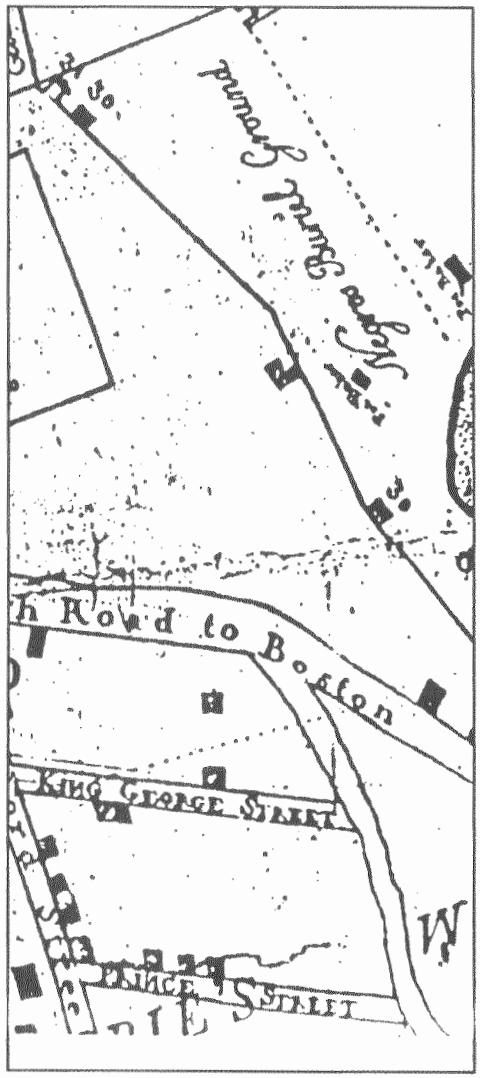
> ...the Negroes were much discouraged from embracing the Christian religion upon account of the very little regard showed them in any religious respect. Their marriages were performed by mutual consent only, without the blessing of the Church; they were buried by those of their own country or complexion in the common field, without any Christian office...No notice was given of their being sick that they might be visited; on the contrary, frequent discourse were made in conversations that they had no souls and perished as beasts.

Valentine's Manual provides the other known documented reference to the burial ground:

> Beyond the commons lay what in the earliest settlement of the town had been appropriated as a burial place for Negroes, slave and free. It was a desolated, unappropriated spot, descending with a gentle declivity towards a ravine which led to the Kalchhook Pond. The Negroes in this city were both in the Dutch and English colonial times a proscribed and detested race.. Many of them native Africans, imported hither in slave ships, and retaining their native superstitions and burial customs, mummeries and outcries...So little seems to have been thought of the race that not even a dedication of their burial place was made by church authorities, or any others who might reasonably be supposed to have interest in such a matter. The lands were unappropriated, and though within convenient distance from the city, the locality was unattractive and desolate, so that by permission the slave population were allowed to inter their dead there (Valentine 1847:567).

The specific boundaries of the burial ground are not known, but it is believed that present day City Hall may sit on a southern portion of the burial ground.

It was estimated in 1992 during an excavation of a portion of the renamed "African Burial Ground," that between 10,000 to 20,000 people were interred in the burial ground. (Detail of 1755 Maerschalk Map appears below).



African American Beginnings Part III will continue in the Spring issue of UPDATE

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